

Section

2

Shoguns and Samurai

Get-Ready to Read!

What's the Connection?

In the last section, you learned how Japan's leaders looked to China as a model of government. As you have learned, warlords sometimes took over parts of China. As you will read, Japan had similar problems.

Focusing on the Main Ideas

- During the A.D. 700s, Japan built a strong national government at Nara, and Buddhism became a popular religion. (page 492)
- Japan's civilian government and the emperor came to be dominated by military rulers known as shoguns. (page 493)
- As the shogun's power weakened, Japan broke into warring kingdoms run by rulers known as daimyo. (page 496)

Locating Places

Heian (HAY•ahn)

Kamakura (kah•MAH•kuh•RAH)

Meeting People

Minamoto Yoritomo (mee•nah•moh•toh yoh•ree•toh•moh)

Ashikaga Takauji (ah•shee•kah•gah tah•kow•jee)

Building Your Vocabulary

samurai (SA•muh•RY)

shogun (SHOH•guhn)

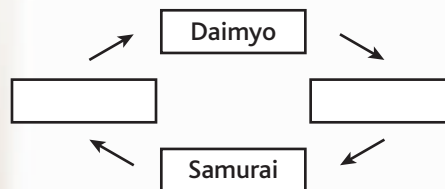
daimyo (DY•mee•OH)

vassal (VA•suhl)

feudalism (FYOO•duhl•IH•zuhl)

Reading Strategy

Showing Relationships Create a diagram to show the relationship between daimyo and samurai.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

When & Where?



A.D. 700

A.D. 794

Japan's capital moved to Heian

1100

1192

Rule by shoguns begins

1500

1477

Civil war ends in Japan

Nara Japan

Main Idea During the A.D. 700s, Japan built a strong national government at Nara, and Buddhism became a popular religion.

Reading Focus Do you know anyone who was hired for a job because they were friends with the boss or because the boss knew their family? Read to learn how Japan's emperor chose people for government jobs.

In the early A.D. 700s, Japan's emperors built a new capital city called Nara. For the next 100 years, Nara was the center of government and religion in Japan. Because of Nara's importance, the history of Japan during the A.D. 700s is called the Nara Period.

The city of Nara looked much like China's capital of Changan, only smaller. It had broad streets, large public squares, government offices, Buddhist temples, and Shinto shrines. Nobles and their families lived in large, Chinese-style homes. The typical home of a noble had wooden walls,

a heavy tile roof, and polished wooden floors. It also included an inner garden.

The Emperor's Government At Nara, Japanese emperors added to the changes begun by Prince Shotoku. They organized government officials into ranks, or levels of importance from top to bottom. However, unlike China, Japan did not use examinations to hire officials. Instead, the emperor gave the jobs to nobles from powerful families. Once a person was appointed to a job, he could pass on his office to his son or other relatives. For their services, top government officials received estates, or large farms. They also were given farmers to work the land.

The emperor's power came from his control of the land and its crops. To measure Japan's wealth, the government carried out a census. It counted all the people in the country. The census also listed the lands on which people lived and worked. Based on the census results, all people who held land from the emperor had to pay taxes in rice or silk cloth. The men counted in the census had to serve in the army.

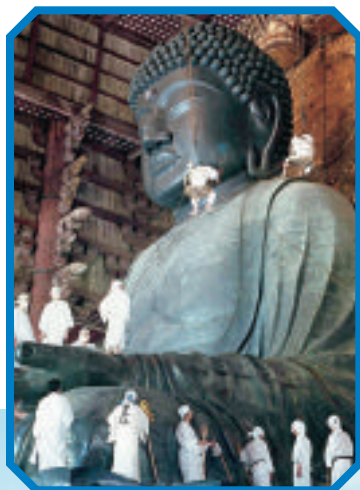
Buddhism Spreads in Japan At the same time that the emperor's government was growing strong, Buddhism became popular in Japan. Buddhism came to Japan from Korea in the A.D. 500s. Japanese government officials and nobles were the first to accept the new religion. Then, during the A.D. 600s and A.D. 700s, Buddhism spread rapidly among the common people. It soon became a major religion in Japan and had an important role in government and society.

As Buddhism became more powerful, nobles who were not Buddhists began to oppose the religion. Soon, those who backed Buddhism and those who opposed it were fighting for control of the government.



▲ Built in the early A.D. 600s, the Horyuji temple in Nara, Japan, is the oldest wooden building in the world.

Inside the ►
Todaji temple is
Japan's largest
statue of the
Buddha. It is
made of copper
and gold, weighs
250 tons, and is
nearly 50 feet tall.



▲ The Todaji temple was first built in A.D. 752 to serve as the head temple for Buddhism in Japan. It is the world's largest wooden structure. This reconstruction was built in 1692.

In A.D. 770 a Buddhist monk who served in the government tried to seize the throne and become emperor. He was stopped by the emperor's family and leading nobles.

Frightened by this event, the emperor and his family briefly turned away from Buddhism. Remember how the government in China attacked Buddhist monasteries when they became strong? In Japan, instead of attacking the Buddhists, the emperor simply decided to leave Nara and its many Buddhist monks.

✔ **Reading Check Contrast** How was the Japanese system of hiring officials different from the Chinese system?

The Rise of the Shogun

Main Idea Japan's civilian government and the emperor came to be dominated by military rulers known as shoguns.

Reading Focus Every leader promises certain things to the people in return for their support. In the United States, what promises do politicians make to win votes? Read to learn how Japan's nobles increased their power by giving land in return for people's support.

In A.D. 794, Emperor Kammu of Japan began building a new capital city called **Heian** (HAY•ahn). This city later became known as Kyoto (kee•OH•toh). Like Nara, Heian was modeled on the Chinese city of Changan. It remained the official capital of Japan for more than 1,000 years.

The Government Weakens During the A.D. 800s, the emperor's power declined. Why did this happen? After a time of strong emperors, a number of weak emperors came to the throne. Many of these emperors were still only children, and court officials known as regents had to govern for them. A regent is a person who rules for an emperor who is too young or too sick to rule. When the emperors grew up, however, the regents refused to give up their power.

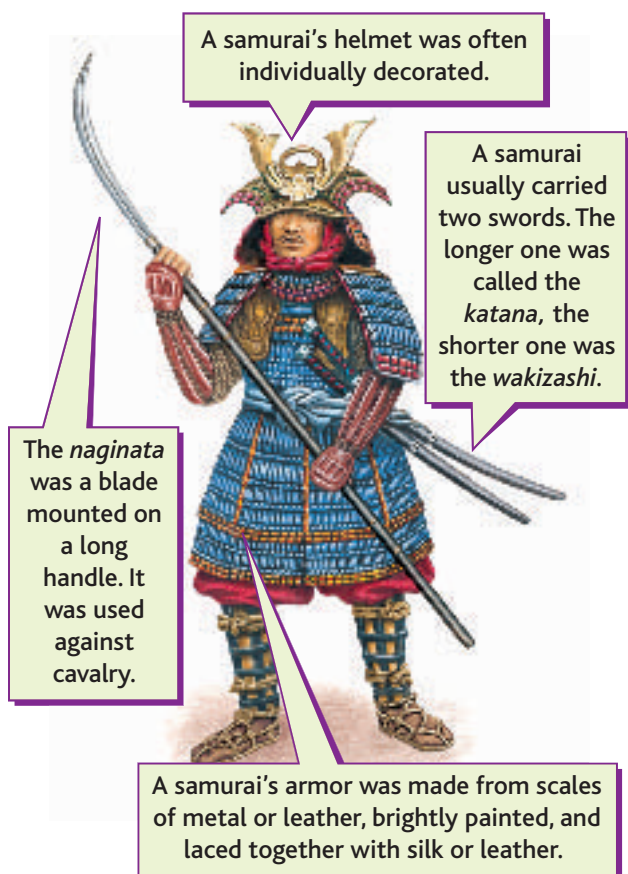
Most regents came from a clan called the Fujiwara. Under the Fujiwara, Japan's emperors were honored, but they no longer had real power. Instead of ruling, these emperors spent time studying Buddhism or writing poetry in their palace at Heian.

History  **Online**

Web Activity Visit jat.glencoe.com and click on *Chapter 14—Student Web Activity* to learn more about medieval Japan.

As the Fujiwara grew wealthy and powerful in Heian, other powerful nobles gained control of much of the land in the provinces of Japan. This happened because the government gave the nobles lands as a way to pay them for their work. At the same time, new lands were settled as Japan's empire expanded. The nobles who settled farmers on these lands were allowed to keep the lands.

To keep the nobles happy, the government let them stop paying taxes, but it put them in charge of governing the lands under their control. In order to govern their lands, the nobles began collecting more taxes from the peasants working the land.



▲ At first, most samurai fought on horseback. Later samurai were foot soldiers who fought with a variety of weapons. **What was the samurai code of conduct called?**

Who Were the Samurai? To protect their lands and enforce the law, nobles formed private armies. To create their armies, they gave land to warriors who agreed to fight for them. These warriors became known as **samurai** (SA•muh•RY).

In battle, samurai fought on horseback with swords, daggers, and bows and arrows. They wore armor made of leather or steel scales laced together with silk cords. Their helmets had horns or crests, and they wore masks designed to be terrifying.

The word *samurai* means “one who serves.” The samurai lived by a strict code of conduct. It was called Bushido, or “the way of the warrior.” This code demanded that a samurai be loyal to his master as well as courageous, brave, and honorable. Samurai were not supposed to care for wealth. They regarded merchants as lacking in honor.

Pledged to these principles, a samurai would rather die in battle than betray his lord. He also did not want to suffer the disgrace of being captured in battle. The sense of loyalty that set apart the samurai continued into modern times. During World War II, many Japanese soldiers fought to the death rather than accept defeat or capture. Since that conflict, the Japanese have turned away from the military beliefs of the samurai.

What Is a Shogun? By the early 1100s, the most powerful Japanese families had begun fighting each other using their samurai armies. They fought over land and to gain control over the emperor and his government. In 1180 the Gempei War began. The Gempei War was a civil war between the two most powerful clans: the Taira family

and the Minamoto family. In 1185 the Minamoto forces defeated the Taira in a sea battle near the island of Shikoku.

The leader of the Minamoto was a man named **Minamoto Yoritomo** (mee•nah•moh•toh yoh•ree•toh•moh). (In Japanese a person's family name comes first, followed by the personal name.) Yoritomo was the commander of the Minamoto armies. After Yoritomo won the Gempei War, the emperor worried that the Minamoto family would try to replace the Yamato family as the rulers of Japan. He decided it would be better to reward Yoritomo to keep him loyal.

In 1192 the emperor gave Yoritomo the title of **shogun** (SHOH•guhnh)—commander of all of the emperor's military forces. This decision created two governments in Japan. The emperor stayed in his palace at Heian with his bureaucracy. He was still officially the head of the country, but he had no power. Meanwhile the shogun set up his own government at his headquarters in **Kamakura** (kah•MAH•kuh•RAH), a small seaside town. This military government was known as a shogunate. Japan's government was run by a series of shoguns for the next 700 years.

Yoritomo proved to be a ruthless ruler. He killed most of his relatives, fearing that they would try to take power from him. Yoritomo and the shoguns after him appointed high-ranking samurai to serve as advisers and to run the provinces. Bound by an oath of loyalty, these samurai lords ruled Japan's villages, kept the peace, and gathered taxes. They became the leading group in Japanese society.

The Mongols Attack In the late 1200s, the Kamakura shogunate faced its greatest test. In 1274 and again in 1281, China's Mongol emperor Kublai Khan sent out ships and

Primary Source

Bushido Code

This passage describes the samurai's Bushido.



"It is further good fortune if . . . [a servant] had wisdom and talent and can use them appropriately. But even a person who is good for nothing . . . will be a reliable retainer [servant] if only he has the determination to think earnestly of [respect and admire] his master. Having only wisdom and talent is the lowest tier [level] of usefulness."

—Yamamoto Tsunetomo,
*Hagakure: The Book of
the Samurai*

◀ Samurai armor



Document-Based Question

How powerful is a samurai's determination to respect and admire his master?

warriors to invade Japan. Both times, the Mongols were defeated because violent Pacific storms smashed many of their ships. The Mongol troops who made it ashore were defeated by the Japanese.

The victorious Japanese named the typhoons *kamikaze* (KAH•mih•KAH•zee), or "divine wind," in honor of the spirits they believed had saved their islands. Much later, during World War II, Japanese pilots deliberately crashed their planes into enemy ships. They were named kamikaze pilots after the typhoons of the 1200s.

Reading Check Identify Who was the shogun, and why was he important?

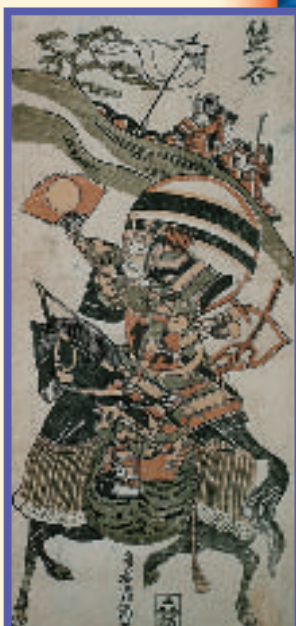
The Way It Was

Focus on Everyday Life

Samurai The path to becoming a samurai was difficult and dangerous. Mothers in samurai families began teaching their sons Bushido at a young age. They taught their sons to place bravery, honor, and loyalty above all else. Each young warrior knew and could recite from memory the brave feats of his samurai ancestors.

For centuries, young samurai lived apart from their families in the castle of their lord or in the barracks of their lord's town. Beginning in the 1800s, samurai schools were built, and boys lived there to continue the education their mothers had started. From the age of 10, they trained in the martial arts and studied other subjects, such as math and astronomy. By the age of 16, some young men were already promising warriors who distinguished themselves in battle.

Painting of a ▶
samurai hero



Connecting to the Past

1. What lessons was the mother of a samurai responsible for teaching her young son?
2. Do you think soldiers today have a code of conduct similar to Bushido? Explain.

The Daimyo Divide Japan

Main Idea As the shogun's power weakened, Japan broke into warring kingdoms run by rulers known as daimyo.

Reading Focus Have you ever been promised something and then been upset when the promise was broken? Read to learn how Japan's shogun lost power because the samurai felt he had broken his promises.

The Kamakura shogunate ruled Japan until 1333. By that time, many samurai had become resentful. Over the years, as samurai divided their lands among their sons, the piece of land each samurai owned became smaller and smaller. By the 1300s, many samurai felt they no longer owed the shogun loyalty because he had not given them enough land.

In 1331 the emperor rebelled, and many samurai came to his aid. The revolt succeeded, but the emperor was not able to gain control of Japan because he too refused to give more land to the samurai. Instead, a general named **Ashikaga Takauji** (ah•shee•kah•gah tah•kow•jee) turned against the emperor and made himself shogun in 1333. A new government known as the Ashikaga shogunate began.

The Ashikaga shoguns proved to be weak rulers, and revolts broke out across Japan. The country soon divided into a number of small territories. These areas were headed by powerful military lords known as **daimyo** (DY•mee•oh).

The daimyo pledged loyalty to the emperor and the shogun. However, they ruled their lands as if they were independent kingdoms. To protect their lands, the daimyo created their own local armies made up of samurai warriors, just as other nobles had done in the past.

Many samurai became **vassals** (VA•suhlz) of a daimyo. That is, a samurai gave an oath

of loyalty to his daimyo and promised to serve him in times of war. In return, each daimyo gave land to his samurai warriors—more land than they had been given by the shogun. This bond of loyalty between a lord and a vassal is known as **feudalism** (FYOO•duhl•IH•zuhl). In the next chapter, you will learn about a similar form of feudalism that arose in Europe during the Middle Ages.

With the breakdown of central government, Japan's warriors fought each other. From 1467 to 1477, the country suffered through the disastrous Onin War. During this conflict, the city of Kyoto (Heian) was almost completely destroyed. Armies passed back and forth through the city, burning temples and palaces.

For 100 years after the Onin War, a series of weak shoguns tried to reunite Japan. Powerful daimyo, however, resisted their



▲ The Takamatsu castle was built in 1590. It sits on the edge of a sea and was once surrounded by moats, gates, and towers for protection.

control. Fighting spread throughout the country. The violence finally brought down the Ashikaga shogunate in 1567. By that time, only a handful of powerful daimyo remained. Each of these daimyo was eager to defeat his rivals and rule all of Japan.

Reading Check Analyze Why were shoguns unable to regain control of Japan after the Onin War?

Section 2 Review

History online

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Reading Summary

Review the Main Ideas

- During the Nara Period, the emperor's power grew, and Buddhism spread among Japan's common people.
- Over time, the Japanese emperors lost power to nobles and their armies of samurai. Eventually a military ruler, called a shogun, ruled the country.
- In the 1400s and 1500s, the shoguns lost power, and military lords, called daimyo, divided Japan into a number of small territories.

What Did You Learn?

1. **What was a shogun? Who was the first shogun, and how did he gain his position of power?**
2. **What prevented the Mongol conquest of Japan?**
3. **Organizing Information** Draw a diagram like the one below. Add details about the samurai, such as their weapons, dress, and beliefs.
4. **Describe** Describe events related to the growth of Buddhism in Japan.
5. **Explain** Why did the power of the Japanese emperors decline during the A.D. 800s?
6. **Analyze** How did the beliefs of the samurai affect Japanese soldiers in World War II?
7. **Expository Writing** Create a constitution, or plan for government, that describes the relationship between the emperor and shogun, the daimyo, and the samurai.

